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Taming the Salesforce beast: Show Me Your Stack
By Rob Burgess
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Welcome to "Show Me Your Stack," a series from Financial Planning in which we interview those who deliver financial advice to learn what tools they rely on to make it happen. Rising client expectations are driving the need for more powerful tech tools, and we're digging deep to find out why advisors prefer certain solutions.

Advisors who have experience using Salesforce as their CRM solution know how powerful of a tool it can be if guided and used properly.

But without adequate planning, the platform can quickly become unwieldy.

It's a situation Amanda Butler is well familiar with. Since 2008, she has been a principal at Mosaik Consulting in Bedminster, New Jersey. Part of her responsibilities include "ensuring that the Salesforce platform is effectively leveraged to drive business success."

Overlapping with her time at Mosaik Consulting, she worked as an outsourced consultant for over a decade for national financial advisor and investment management firm Nepsis in Minneapolis, Minnesota. In this capacity, she assisted in the expansion of Nepsis' use of the Salesforce platform with its advisors.

"I worked with them ever since, helping them optimize Salesforce along the way," she said.

Since Nepsis first deployed Salesforce for its advisors as its CRM around 13 or 14 years ago, Butler said she has been instrumental in developing the platform to meet the firm's needs.

"Nepsis uses it as their source of truth and their hub around all complementary technologies," she said.

Butler said about a year ago, she was on a call with Mark Pearson, co-founder of Nepsis, and he discussed building a proprietary mobile app that would facilitate interaction between advisors and clients. In addition, Pearson wanted the app to provide clients with informative content, access to their portfolios and ways to directly connect with their advisors, as well as providing their advisors information about their financial pictures.

"They needed somebody to spearhead the development of that app," she said.

As a result, since April 2024, Butler has served as chief technology officer at Nepsis, where she leads the firm's overall technology strategy and oversees the technical infrastructure. Nepsis currently has over $500 million in assets under management (AUM) and has a staff of 12 advisors, including Pearson, and 15 full-time tax professionals.

"We do a tremendous amount of workflow automation," she said. "Nepsis is very structured. We have a lot of built-in workflow tools just to help keep the back office efficient. We run a fairly decent-sized business with not a lot of back-office staff because of the structured workflows that we've implemented."

Scroll down the slideshow to see what Butler feels are some of the most important pieces of Nepsis' tech stack — and why.

CRM: Salesforce
"I'm fortunately effective at integrating Salesforce, just based on my background. I've been working in the space for so long, working with Nepsis, understanding what their back office workflow is and how their advisors are using the tool. It's definitely a tool that you have to constantly develop, invest in and always sort of re-evaluate how you're using it because the technology changes so much. Salesforce is not exempt from that.

"Nepsis' Salesforce is highly customized to create front-end, back-end and client efficiencies. We strive to consider both employee and client experiences whenever implementing functionality.

"We have a thorough process to gather and obtain information from our clients to provide the best service possible. Clients leverage our interactive web forms to provide a full financial and personal picture at the onset of the engagement. Because our forms are tightly integrated with Salesforce, all the data gets pushed to and stored in Salesforce. Future requests for information do not require the client to submit redundant data because we present them with the data we've already collected and have in our system. Advisors have instant actionable access to this data making further downstream processes, like account opening, much more efficient.

"We leverage many structured workflows within Salesforce, and because of this, our back-office functions incredibly efficiently and with less human capital than one would expect because of these efficiencies. All onboarding, offboarding and client service requests are performed with prescriptive processes that have been vetted and tested by our team to not only create operational efficiency but also provide continuous visibility for our advisors into all client service activities."

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Portfolio management: Orion
"It's an aggregator, and we have a pretty tight integration with Salesforce we're leveraging there. It provides access to our advisors to see the business as well as

the back office.

"Orion does a great job at their integration with Salesforce. It was something that they developed years ago. From my experience, they're one of the tightest integrators into Salesforce."

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Document management: DocuSign, NetDocuments, Conga and FormsAssembly
"We leverage DocuSign for electronic signature and have recently leveraged their newly released workflow tool that allows you to create a seamless automated process to collect Salesforce data, update data from forms requiring signature and update Salesforce.

"We are also using a tool called FormsAssembly. That's another piece of software that we use to gather client data. We've used that for quite a few years. It's a great, robust tool that provides clients with an easy way to give us onboarding data. That has a direct integration into Salesforce. The data is streamed right into Salesforce, so we're not asking clients for the same information more than once.

"We use a series of Conga products to facilitate an easy population of custodial and proprietary forms and create complex and intuitive workflows and document generation tools."

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Financial planning: eMoney Advisor
"That's at the discretion of the advisor, but most of our advisors are using eMoney.

"The financial planning tools have been a struggle in terms of Salesforce integration. None of them have direct integration. You have to facilitate with a third party. But so far, that hasn't necessarily been a challenge yet. But, that's maybe an area we can look into as we're building our data warehouse."

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Data warehouse: Amazon Redshift
"We also are in the process of building the mobile app. With that, we started to develop it based on Amazon Redshift.

"We have a lot of process automation, making sure that we have clean data. We are looking to leverage the next phase of AI, but it's only as good as the quality of your data. We're working to prepare for that, and then also leveraging Amazon Redshift to hopefully provide some good analytics in the future."

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